

## INDEPENDENT STATUS AND HELP DISPLAY

### ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

When a user wants to display application program status information or invoke a help function (either manually or automatically), a context-sensitive status or help display is provided that is either physically or virtually separate from the application program display. That is, the status or help display does not conceal or otherwise interfere with the main output of the application program. With this arrangement, the user is not inconvenienced by invoking a status request or help functions, nor is the user distracted by its display. The status or help information may be displayed in a portion of a single screen that does not overlap with the active window of the application program (a *virtually* separate display). Alternatively, a *physically* separate auxiliary display may be provided for display of the status or help information.